

Sudan and Uganda to resume talks over strained relations

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October 10, 2012 (KHARTOUM) - Sudan and Uganda agreed to reactivate a joint committee between the two countries to discuss contentious issues and improve strained relations, a Sudanese official said .

Salah El-Din Wansi, state ministry for foreign affairs told the official news agency SUNA on Monday evening following his return from Kampala that the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, directed to reactivate a joint committee to tackle ways to improve bilateral relations and to ease tensions.

Kampala accuses Sudan of supporting the rebel Lord Resistance Army (LRA) which operates in South Sudan's Western Equatoria and neighbouring countries of Congo and Central African Republic. Last May Museveni said they have intelligence that LRA rebels were planning a major offensive and warned Sudan over reports saying they received weapons from Sudan.

To put pressure on Khartoum to stop its alleged support to the LRA rebels, Uganda since more than a year opened its territory for various Sudanese rebel groups who are now based in Kampala.

The two countries held different meetings in the past but they failed to settle the issues of rebel groups as Kampala insisted that Sudan should help to arrest Joseph Kony. But Khartoum kept saying they have no contact with the notorious rebel leader.

Wansi said upon his arrival to Khartoum airport after his return from Kampala that President Yoweri Museveni instructed to activate the joint political committee between Sudan and Uganda to settle the contentious issues and ameliorate the bilateral ties.

The state minister for foreign affairs was in Kamapla with the vice-president Al-Haj Adam Youssef who led Sudan's delegation for the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held on 7 and 8 October, the delegation also represented Sudan in the celebration of 50th Uganda's independence day.

He added that Al-Haj met Museveni and discussed with him issues of mutual concern and bilateral relations. The Sudanese state minister further said the Ugandan President welcomed the cooperation agreements inked last September between Sudan and South Sudan.

Wansi described the meeting as "successful" stressing it touched on many topics of interest to the two countries.

Sudan had admitted in the past using the LRA rebels to fight the insurgency in southern Sudan before the signing of a peace agreement in January 2005 with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) which was supported by the Ugandan government.

The SPLM are now the governing party of South Sudan, which seceded from Sudan in July last year.

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